

# A day in the life of a medical student

## Lesson overview

### Intro

This interactive session aims to explore the relationship between reflection and well-being. It makes participants more aware of the importance of reflection in their lives, both as a medical student and person, and to give them ideas for being more reflective.

The bulk of the session is spent playing a board game.

### The game

As players go around the board they progress through a 'typical' pre-clinical medical student's day, encountering various scenarios, mostly negative, as they do so. One person plays a reflective student the other a non-reflective student. Each player starts with either 3 reflective or 3 non-reflective response cards. At each scenario, the player chooses a response from their cards and discusses with their partner how the response would affect their thoughts and feelings. These are then written around each player's character sheet. The response card is swapped for another from the deck, so you have 3 cards at all times, and the game continues.

At the end of the game, the character sheets will contain a map of the thoughts and feelings experienced by the reflective and non-reflective medical student during the 'day'. Despite both players encountering similar scenarios, the character sheets ought to be very different. By looking around the character sheets, it should (hopefully!) be clear that the reflective student has an improved health and well-being compared to the non-reflective medical student.

The response cards give examples of ways to be reflective and give the players opportunities to see them applied to everyday scenarios as they go around the board. A small number of positive scenarios are included to remind students that reflection isn't just for when things go badly.

The board game is accompanied by a small PowerPoint presentation. It's best to read the detailed lesson plan before hand as it takes you through what should be said on each slide. It also shares a few take-home points from the game that should be shown to the class.

All information, unless otherwise stated, is based on the GMC's 'Achieving Good Medical Practice' and so page numbers throughout the text refer to this.

Hopefully you'll enjoy it!

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In order to run the lesson you will need:

This lesson plan

The PowerPoint presentation

The board game (includes a board, cards and character sheets)

Duration: Approx. 25 mins

Demographic: Medical students of all years

**Set-up:** Get students into pairs. Give them a board, the two sets of cards, two character sheets, two counters and a coin / spinner / dice. Load PowerPoint. Cutting out the cards beforehand might take a while, so you could just print off the cards and provide scissors for each pair. This would add about 5 minutes preparation time to the lesson, though.

If you have an odd number of people, permit the establishment of a group of three. Two people can be reflective and unreflective medical students, the third can produce the character sheets and help in discussions.

### Suggested lesson timings:

2 min introduction and definitions

15 min explaining the rules and playing the board game

6 min discussion

*Spread over two slides. Main points are listed in the detailed lesson plan.*

2 min conclusion and take-home points

*Read out the explanations of each take home point which again are in the detailed lesson plan.*

# Detailed lesson plan

## Slide 1



Title page for showing as people take their seats. Now is a good opportunity to get them into pairs and hand out the board games.

## Slide 2



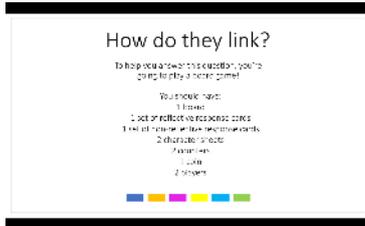
(Page 10)

## Slide 3



2 mins

## Slide 4



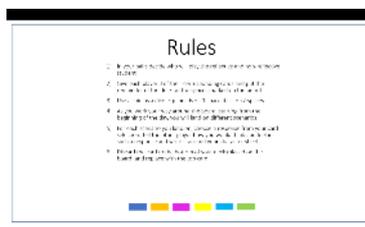
You don't necessarily need a coin, just any way in which you can decide upon the number of spaces to move. The number of cards to each board game doesn't matter too much as long as it is of a considerable size.

## Slide 5



The instructions are also placed on the board itself so if anybody can't read the screen properly or is confused direct them to the board and see if it helps.

## Slide 6



Just for clarification, when a player is moved forwards or backwards by a special space the space that they land on then becomes the scenario that they look that.

15 mins

If a player decides to make his own response card up he needn't have a physical copy of it. He can just explain to the other player what it is and then write his feelings around his character sheet.

## Slide 7



Get feedback from players.

You're essentially looking for reflection = more stable emotions throughout the day.

2 mins

In the long term, this will help to reduce stress and the development of anxiety and depression.

Slide 8



Additional questions if time allows:

Did you create any of your own cards?

Did you learn any new reflective strategies?

Have you encountered any of the scenarios described in real life? If so, how did you react to them?

Do come up with your own or just see where the discussion leads!

In the discussion, aim to extract the following points:

Q1) Reflecting can help you feel more in control of situations and so reduce stress. It helps you think about the positives of a situation and put things into perspective. Yet is also allows you to take the negatives and put them into self-improvements so that next time you'll fare better. By being more aware of yours' and others' feelings you'll tackle scenarios more sensitively making you and those around you all the better for it.

Q2) Reflection, as seen (hopefully) on the character cards works to stabilise emotions making you better able to deal with doubt and uncertainty; it allows you to respond more effectively to feedback (both good and bad, see board spaces); and by thinking about your emotional state you can more easily mitigate against personal bias (page 41). All of this culminates in you striving for excellence (page 07). Reflection also helps you identify your limits and ensure patient safety (page 11).

Q3) Although the environment and the people you interact with will change, the principles of reflection remain the same whatever the encounter. You think about your actions, feelings, the effect of those around you, and what you can do to improve (page 9). Perhaps discuss how the mediums in which you reflect may change. For example, in clinical practice you may use your NHS e-portfolio to write reflective logs / essays more often (page 59) than under an academic setting. You may also become more involved in teaching, and so reflection will help you to perform in the most effective manner (page 31).

4 min

(Or more if you want to spend longer on the session)

Slide 9



Take home points:

For each point in the PowerPoint read out the explanations below to your audience.

Point 1) This applies across all aspects of your medical training. By simply being more aware of what you did there, how you felt here, what that person said earlier, you will approach future situations with a greater sensitivity and respect for both yourself and those around you.

Point 2) You're essentially improving your emotional intelligence. Rather than just noticing that you feel sad you now understand why you feel like you do. This makes you feel more in control of yourself and therefore others. Reflection promotes continual self-development and you therefore feel satisfied at learning one more thing about yourself / others than you did that morning.

Point 3) Reflection helps to remove unconscious bias that you may have built up from previous encounters (page 41). You therefore meet every person, whether that be a colleague, friend or patient, in the same non-judgemental balanced way. Feedback from your peers sets the standard expected of you and reflection gives you the learning tools to reach it (page 9). Most importantly, reflection makes you happier and it is fair to say that a happy doctor is at least an improvement over a grumpy one.

2 mins